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UNIVERSITY  
Department of Anthropology

ANTHROPOS

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**Giving & Receiving:** One of the most difficult situations Americans encounter in other cultures is gift giving and receiving. Giving and receiving gifts is a standard part of hospitality in most cultures. Most cultures have standards about what makes a good gift - and what does not -, how a gift is to be presented, and how it is to be reciprocated. Americans abroad routinely make three errors with gift giving: they don't give, they don't reciprocate when they receive a gift, and they don't realize that gifts cannot be offset by cash. In traditional cultures, in particular, trying to pay for what a person has given you demeans the gift and the giver, turning hospitality into an ordinary transaction.

Anthropologists also fall into these errors when studying in other cultures. Intellectually, anthropologists know better, but it's hard to leave one's own culture behind when going into another. Americans are so used to buying things - and thinking about transactions in terms of the advantage to them - that it is hard to imagine that people are giving you something simply because it is right. In the following excerpt, anthropologist David Counts describes learning about reciprocity in a horticultural community on the Melanesian island of New Britain (part of Papua New Guinea). This is from an article entitled "Too Many Bananas, Not Enough Pineapples, and No Watermelon At All," contained in The Humbled Anthropologist: Tales From the Pacific (Wadsworth Publishing, 1990). In this article, Counts describes lessons he learned in the field. The first was: In a society where food is shared or gifted as part of social life, you may not buy it with money. This lesson came from many efforts to pay for the food people brought the anthropologist as gifts as they visited and talked.

"By late November, just before the rainy season set in, the bananas were coming into flush, and whereas earlier we had received banana gifts by the 'hand' (six or eight bananas in a cluster cut from the stalk), donors now began to bring bananas 'for the children' by the *stalk!* The Kailai among whom we were living are not exactly specialists in banana cultivation - they only recognize about 30 varieties, while some of their neighbors have twice that many - but the kinds they produce differ considerably from each other in size, shape and taste, so we were not dismayed when we had more than one stalk hanging on our veranda. The stalks ripen a bit at a time, and having

some variety was nice. Still, by the time our accumulation had reached *four* complete stalks, the delights of variety had begun to pale a bit. The fruits were ripening progressively, and it was clear that even if we and the kids ate nothing but bananas for the next week, some would still fall from the stalk onto the floor in a state of gross overripeness. This was the situation as, late one afternoon, a woman came bringing yet another stalk of bananas up the steps of the house.

Several factors determined our reaction to her approach: one was that there was literally no way we could possibly use the bananas. We hadn't quite reached the stage of being crowded off our veranda by the stalks of fruit, but it was close. Another factor was that we were tired of playing the gift game. We had acquiesced in playing it - no one was permitted to sell us anything, and in turn, we only gave things away, refusing under any circumstances to sell tobacco (or anything else) for money. But there had to be a limit. From our perspective what was at issue was that the woman wanted something and she had come to trade for it. Further, what she had brought for trade was something we neither wanted nor could use, and it should have been obvious. So we decided to bite the bullet.

The woman, Rogi, climbed the stairs to the veranda, took the stalk from where it was balanced on her head, and laid it on the floor with the word, 'Here are some bananas for the children.' Dorothy and I sat near her on the floor and thanked her for her thought but explained, 'You know, we really have too many bananas - we can't use these; maybe you ought to give them to someone else ...' The woman looked mystified, then brightened and explained that she didn't want anything for them, she wasn't short of tobacco or anything. They were just a gift for the kids. Then she just sat there, and we sat there, and the bananas sat there, and we tried again. 'Look,' I said, pointing up to them and counting, 'we've got four stalks already hanging here on the veranda - there are too many for us to eat now. Some are rotting already. Even if we eat only bananas, we can't keep up with what's here!'

Rogi's only response was to insist that these were a gift, and that she didn't want anything for them, so we tried yet another tack: 'Don't *your* children like bananas?' When she admitted that they did, and that she had none at her house, we suggested that she should take them there. Finally, still puzzled, but convinced we weren't going to keep the bananas, she replaced them on her head, went down the stairs, and made her way back through the village toward her house.

As before, it seemed only moments before Kolia (the village headman) was making his way up the stairs, but this time he hadn't brought the woman in tow. 'What was wrong with those bananas? Were they no good?' he demanded. We explained that there was nothing wrong with the bananas at all, but that we simply couldn't use them and it seemed foolish to take them when we had so many and Rogi's own children had none. We obviously didn't make ourselves clear to because Kolia took up the same refrain that Rogi had - he insisted that we shouldn't be worried about taking the bananas, because they were a gift for the children and Rogi hadn't wanted anything for them. There was no reason, he added, to send her away with them - she would be

ashamed. I'm afraid we must have seemed as if we were hard of hearing or thought he was, for our only response was to repeat our reasons. We went through it again - there they hung, one, two, three, *four*, stalks of bananas, rapidly ripening and already far beyond our capacity to eat - we just weren't ready to accept any more and let them rot (and, we added to ourselves, pay for them with tobacco, to boot).

Kolia finally realized that we were neither hard of hearing nor intentionally offensive, but merely ignorant. He stared at us for a few minutes, thinking, and then asked: 'Don't you frequently have visitors during the day and evening?' We nodded. Then he asked, 'Don't you usually offer them cigarettes and coffee?' Again, we nodded. 'Did it ever occur to you to suppose,' he said, 'that your visitors might be hungry?' It was at this point in the conversation, as we recall, that we began to see the depth of the pit we had dug for ourselves. We nodded, hesitantly. His last words to us before he went down the stairs and stalked away were just what we were by that time afraid they might be. 'When your guests are hungry, *feed them bananas!*'

*Lesson 2: Never refuse a gift, and never fail to return a gift. If you cannot use it, you can always give it away to someone else - there is no such thing as too much - there are never too many bananas.*

**Department Store English:** Before the early 1960's, linguists viewed language variation as something that was nearly impossible to study. Language variation was seen as random and idiosyncratic, and was therefore treated as if it were a compilation of errors, rather than as a significant feature of language. Noam Chomsky, the pioneer linguist who revolutionized the way the social sciences view language and language learning, personified this view in asserting that the goal of linguistic study was to uncover linguistic competence, the math-like formalized rules that he presumed to underlie speech behavior, while variation was consigned to a category of performance error.

But not all linguists were convinced that language variation was so insignificant. Among them was William Labov who believed that statistical analysis could reveal patterns in language variation. As a pilot study to prove his point, Labov conducted research in three department stores in New York City - Saks, Macys, and Gimbels. In each store, he would locate an item that could be found on the fourth floor. He then went from clerk to clerk on other floors, asking where that item could be found. When they answered, he asked them to repeat their answer, thus eliciting a more emphatic response. After questioning a clerk, he would then duck behind a counter and quickly phonetically transcribe what he had just heard.

The responses he was eliciting were full of potential for linguistic variation. The word "fourth" can be pronounced with or without an "r", the final sound might be a "th", a "f", or a "t", and the vowel, "o", can be pronounced in a variety of different ways. (We hope that linguists in the audience will forgive the use of orthographic symbols for sounds rather than phonetic transcriptions, with which most readers will be unfamiliar.) Similarly "floor" may be spoken with or without an "r", and with several variations on

the vowel. And, of course, one individual speaker could mix these variables differently from another. By eliciting two different samples of "fourth floor", Labov could also determine if the second, more stressed, pronunciation was different from the first.

When he surveyed his results, he found distinct patterns emerging, both between and within the stores. He found that he was most likely to elicit the textbook pronunciation of "fourth floor" in Saks, followed by Macy's, and then Gimbel's. This linguistic stratification seemed to match shoppers' perceptions of the relative statuses of the three stores. Furthermore, he found that as he traveled from the basement to the upper floors of any of the three that there was a greater incidence of the textbook pronunciation. Clerks working in the "bargain basements" of all three stores were more likely to use nonstandard pronunciations, such as "fourf floo", than their counterparts at higher levels, though again, the basement clerks in Saks used the most textbook pronunciations. He also found that second, stressed pronunciations were more likely to be textbook pronunciations, showing that most speakers knew more than one variant of the phrase. All of these differences were statistically significant at the .01 level.

Since Labov's time (his original study of New York City was published in 1966), a couple of generations of linguistics graduate students have confirmed Labov's findings not only in New York but also in other American cities where there are several department stores differing in prestige and having more than one floor (including Dr. Minderhout who conducted one of these studies in Washington, D.C. in 1971 for a graduate course in field methods in linguistics.) Follow-up studies have shown that other phrases work as well as "fourth floor" in eliciting the variational patterns. Also, other studies have surreptitiously used tape recorders to record the speech of clerks to show that Labov's ears and phonetic transcriptions were not faulty. (Secret tape recording of informants' speech was a common part of linguistics in the pre-Watergate era when informed consent by informants was not part of standard social science practice.)

Subsequent studies have asked employers how they screened job applicants to achieve these kinds of speech patterns. Most employers have denied both that they were making decisions based on speech or that the patterns existed; a few have said that they were aware of speech differences among applicants but that these made no difference in the final placement of the applicant within the store. However, a study by Roger Shuy and others with the 25 largest employers in the Washington, D.C. area found those employers willing to make judgements on the employability of people based on 15 second speech samples. The employers not only decided whether or not to hire the speaker, but what kind of job was appropriate for them. (The speech samples were randomly assorted among people of different social classes and were chosen to not reveal any content about the speaker's background.) But when they were asked to pick out which features of speech they had used to make their decision, they were unable - or unwilling - to do so.

The relationship of linguistic variation to the social characteristics of speakers has

view of archaeology - the archaeologist as seeker of fantastic artifacts. Archaeologists are fond of artifacts, but their primary interest is understanding the way of life of past cultures. Thus, the most important thing about artifacts is their relationship to each other - their context. A particular grouping of stone tools may indicate a butchering site; a patch of discolored soil may indicate where saplings were thrust into the ground to produce the framework of a structure. That's why archaeologists spend countless hours recording exactly where each item was found. Most artifacts recovered are not particularly striking in and of themselves - some bits of carbon, broken pottery or flakes from the manufacture of stone tools. But taken as a whole in context, they can reveal a great deal about how people lived. Archaeologists are much more like Sherlock Holmes, doing detective work on small bits of evidence, than swashbucklers like Indiana Jones.

4) The most important thing about archaeology is digging. Certainly the most obvious aspect of archaeology is the actual excavation, and without the excavation, there would be nothing to research. But most of the time spent in archaeological research is spent in a laboratory, cataloging, describing, and recreating artifacts. Dr. Wymer, for instance, spends long hours over a microscope looking at plant remains - seeds, nut shells, pollen, pine needles, etc. - found at archaeological sites which allow her to reconstruct the environment at the time a prehistoric culture lived and perhaps to examine their subsistence, as well. Were they collecting wild plants for food or had domesticated crops filtered in? What kinds of plants were being domesticated - and so on? Excavation is only the beginning of a long process of careful research, involving long hours of lab time and endless number crunching of patterns of artifacts.

5) Archaeologists seek to remove everything from a site. To begin with, this is generally impossible. Archaeologists generally do not have the time or the help to excavate every square inch of a site and remove every possible artifact. Dr. Aletto's work in Ecuador, for example, yields tons of ceramics; it is neither possible nor even scientifically useful to remove, catalog, and examine them all. Generally, archaeologists use sampling techniques, sinking random test pits or cutting trenches through a section of a site. Furthermore, there is the realization that future generations may make significant advances in excavation or laboratory techniques. By preserving part of a site for future work, archaeologists are being responsible to their science. Archaeologists working today are able to recover and learn much more than was possible in 1930 or 1950. Who knows what an archaeologist might recover with new technology in the 21st century? (There are exceptions to this point. Salvage archaeology, which occurs in a situation where a site will be destroyed, such as by a new road or a parking lot, requires archaeologists to remove everything they can, but time and labor usually limits that effort, too.)

In general, archaeology is not quite as it is portrayed in the movies or in the media. In our next issue (January-February), Dr. Aletto discusses the controversy that has grown up in this country over whether Native Americans have the right to control archaeological work.

come to be called sociolinguistics and is now considered a significant subfield of linguistics; anthropological linguists often conduct sociolinguistic research.

**Archaeology - It's Not What You Think:** As noted in our September issue, American anthropology is thought of as being four disciplines, the best known of which is archaeology. Archaeologists attempt to reconstruct the lives of past cultures by excavating their living sites and examining the artifacts left behind. Two of the BU anthropologists are archaeologists - Dr. Tom Aleto, who has conducted work in Ecuador, and Dr. Dee Anne Wymer, who has studied the Hopewell culture of Ohio. But all of the BU anthropologists are constantly confronted by a number of well-meaning, but incorrect assumptions about archaeology as a discipline. In this segment, we will try to correct five popular misconceptions about archaeology.

1) All anthropologists are archaeologists. This is probably the most common misconception about the discipline of anthropology. All of the BU anthropologists routinely have the experience of people beginning conversations with them by talking about "digs" or bones. In fact, as was pointed out in the September issue, most anthropologists are cultural anthropologists (like Drs. Dauria and Minderhout). About 30% of anthropologists are archaeologists. But archaeologists also know more than excavating techniques. Dr. Wymer is also known for her interests in contemporary world problems (as taught in her 46.102 courses) and her background in physical anthropology (she will teach 46.405, Primates, in the fall). And Dr. Aleto is at least as competent in cultural anthropology as in archaeology, as reflected in his course interests, such as 46.410, The Anthropology of Art, or 46.450, Peoples & Cultures of South America. Archaeology is certainly the most publicized subdiscipline of anthropology, which is probably where the misconception begins.

2) All archaeologists are Egyptologists. The archaeologist most people have in mind is someone who is studying the classic civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean world - Egypt, Persia, the Etruscans and Carthaginians, Rome, etc. In fact, archaeology is divided between classical archaeology, which looks at those ancient civilizations, and prehistoric archaeology, which looks at cultures that were prehistoric, that is, that existed before the invention of writing. Anthropologists do prehistoric archaeology; historians do classical archaeology. In reality, the techniques involved are similar, and the division may not be that clear-cut. Anthropologists, for instance, do the research on prehistoric native Americans, but also excavate colonial-era or European contact-era sites. Historic sites are often on top of prehistoric sites: what made a location suitable for humans in 860 AD was probably what appealed to humans in 1860, as well. For example, when Dr. Wymer helped excavate the Great Circle site in Newark, Ohio, in 1992, she and her field school students had to dig through a layer of deposits put down when the site had been a 19th century fairgrounds. But if your image of an archaeologist is someone walking through the dusty corridors of the pyramids, waiting for the Mummy to jump out at them, you're thinking of a historian.

3) The most important thing is the recovery of artifacts. This is the Indiana Jones

**Who's Ethnocentric?** Another common misconception that is found in academics today is the notion that only Europeans, or European-derived cultures, such as middle class America, are ethnocentric. Anthropologists know that all cultures are ethnocentric, and the literature on field methods in anthropology has many recountings of anthropologists being lectured on the failings of their cultures by members of tribal or hunting & gathering societies. A good example of ethnocentrism between non-Western cultures is found in Tony Hillerman's latest mystery novel, Sacred Clowns (Harper Paperbacks, 1993). In this passage, Jim Chee, a Navajo tribal policeman, and Harold Blizzard, a Cheyenne working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, are questioning a Tano woman about a murder and the disappearance of a boy which may be related to the murder:

Mrs. Kanitewa didn't look happy either. She was standing in the door of a fairly new frame-and-stucco house - one of 20 or 30 such houses built on the fringes of the pueblo to meet the specifications of Indian Service housing. She was holding a box of frozen green beans and a butcher-paper package which Chee guessed would be ground beef to be thawed for supper. Through the doorway behind her, Chee could see a great pile of shucked corn filling a corner of the room. Mrs. Kanitewa gave them the smile made mandatory by traditions of hospitality. She didn't look like she meant it.

"Well, come on in then," she said. "Delmar's not home yet, but if you want me to tell you about it again, then come in."

"In" did not prove to be in the frame-and-stucco Indian Service house. She led them across the hard-packed yard toward an adobe. It slouched under an immense cottonwood which looked almost as old as the building. A fringe of ragweeds and Russian thistle growing in its dirt roof gave it a disreputable, unshaven look. But paint on the window frames was a fresh turquoise blue and geraniums were blooming in boxes beside the door. Mrs. Kanitewa seated them in the front room, which served as parlor, living room and dining room. They sat side by side on a sofa whose plastic upholstery creaked and crackled under their weight.

"I guess you haven't found him yet, either," she said. She looked worried now, as if maybe they had found him and were bringing sorrowful news.

"No ma'am," Chee said.

Blizzard was looking around the room. Its brick floor was uneven in places, but mostly covered with cheap, made-in-Mexico throw rugs and one pretty good Navajo horse blanket. Its ceiling was that crisscross pattern of willow branches supported by ponderosa poles which New Mexicans called "latilla." Its corners were obviously off square by three or four degrees and the white plaster covering its walls wavered with the irregular shapes of the adobe blocks behind it. Blizzard cleared his throat.

"That other house," he said. "The new one. Does that belong to you?"

The question surprised Chee, and Mrs. Kanitewa too.

"Yeah. the government built it. We use it to store stuff. They put a big refrigerator over there." She laughed. "They want us to live in it."

Blizzard opened his mouth, and closed it, leaving the question unasked. Chee answered it for him. After all, this Cheyenne was new to adobe country.

"This one's warm in the winter, and cool in the summer," he said.

"This one's home," Mrs. Kanitewa added.

Chee waited a moment in deference to Blizzard. But Blizzard seemed to have assumed the role of spectator. After all, he had already gone through questioning Mrs. Kanitewa once before.

"When Sergeant Blizzard was here," Chee began, "before the ceremonial, Delmar had just got home then. Is that right?"

Mrs. Kanitewa hesitated. "That's right," she said, looking embarrassed. "I didn't say that when he first asked me because I thought it was just about his running away from school. I wanted to talk to Delmar before they took him back to his dad." Clearly Mrs. Kanitewa lied reluctantly, even for her son.

"That day at the ceremonial, I saw Delmar at the kachina dance," Chee continued. "Sergeant Blizzard told me he understood that Delmar had come back to the pueblo but he hadn't had time to come by the house."

Mrs. Kanitewa looked uneasy. She glanced at Blizzard. "It wasn't quite like I told him," she said. She sighed, the weight of motherhood heavy. "He got home the day before the ceremonial. And he told me he was going back to school right after the ceremonial. Robert Sakani was going to drive him back. That's his cousin."

Sergeant Blizzard was trying not to look impatient. He failed.

"But after what happened to Mr. Sayesva, you didn't see him any more after that? Chee asked. "He didn't come home to get his extra clothes or anything like that?"

Mrs. Kanitewa had raised her defenses. Her expression was blank. "No," she said, "he didn't."

Chee was looking past the woman into the kitchen, letting some time pass. He heard Blizzard shifting uneasily on the sofa. Blizzard, he thought, must be a city Cheyenne. With a clock for a brain. What the hell was the hurry?"

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Later, Chee and Blizzard are driving home, after the interview.

"Wonder why the lady wouldn't tell us what the kid brought home?" Blizzard asked. The tone, for Blizzard, was friendly. "Did that strike you as funny?"

"No," said Chee. "She didn't tell us because she didn't know."

Blizzard gave him a sideways glance. "Man, what are you talking about? You don't know women, if you say that. Or you don't know mamas."

Chee said, "Well ..." and then dropped it. Why try to instruct this knucklehead in the Pueblo culture? The patrol car rattled off the gravel road, onto the asphalt toward Albuquerque. Chee let his imagination wander. He saw himself scouting for the Seventh Cavalry, shooting Cheyennes. The satisfaction in that fantasy lasted a few miles ...

**Traveling Abroad:** Richard White, an anthropology major, passed the following clipping onto the Anthropos staff:

How to stay alive on your next vacation: Modern tourism, like modern life, is an increasingly anxious experience. Attacks on tourists in many countries around the world are on the rise. In the U.S., the murder of 19 nonresidents in Florida last year alone has disrupted the tourist economy and prompted international outcry. What are governments doing about the safety of their citizens abroad? Below, Japanese ... government agencies respond to the crisis.

From It helps to Know: A Collection of Phrases for Safe Travel, a pamphlet from the Japanese Ministry of Transport. Even those with a good grasp of a foreign language may have difficulty understanding a sudden command while traveling abroad. ... In some cases, these commands may be warning the listener of danger. However, if the listener cannot understand or ignores them, the other person may attack with violence ... If you are ever involved in such a situation, pay attention to the other person's speech and behavior. Be calm and try not to let the person use violence.

English expressions of warning: These samples will not be used by you. However, you need to accustom yourself to how they sound.

Back off!	Get your hands in the air!
Break it up!	Hold it!
Can it! Shut up!	Let go of me!
Cut it out!	Pull over!
Duck! Freeze!	Snap out of it!
Get down on your knees!	Stand back!
Get lost!	Stay down!
Get out of the way!	You are under arrest!

This excerpt also included the following interesting facts:

Estimated number of foreign visitors who visited the U.S. in 1990: 5 million

Estimated number of foreign tourists who will visit the U.S. in the year 2000: 10 million

Percentage decrease in Japanese visitors to California since 1989: 45%

Destination where Americans would least like to take a vacation: Iraq

Destination where Americans would most like to take a vacation: Europe

Legal minimum number of annual vacation days for Americans : 10 days

Legal minimum for Swedes: 30 days

Minimum number of lawsuits filed against U.S. hotels every year for negligent security: 10,000

Percentage of German tourists who consider Florida unsafe: 53%

Percentage of American travelers who do: 26%

Percentage of Americans who say mowing the lawn is "risky": 54%

**Student Paper Competition:** The Bloomsburg University campus chapter of the Global Awareness Society International in conjunction with the BU Foundation is sponsoring a student paper contest. Papers will be accepted on the theme of Global Population and the Environment. All disciplines are encouraged to participate.

Students wishing to participate must submit a 100-200 word abstract before December 18, 1994. Complete papers must be submitted by the end of the first week of classes of the second semester, January 20, 1995. A panel of GASI members will choose the top six papers and ask their authors to make a formal presentation on February 16, 1995. Based on their written and oral presentations, two students will be invited to present their work at the Fourth Annual Global Awareness Society International Conference which will be held May 19-21 in Shanghai, China. Total costs will be covered by GASI and the BU Foundation.

Student participants must be Bloomsburg University students enrolled in an undergraduate or a graduate program at the university. Students invited to the conference must obtain their own passport and must be legally eligible to travel to the People's Republic of China. Individuals may submit at most 1 paper for consideration. Groups of students may submit a proposal and, if invited to the conference, may share

the travel grant which is worth \$2450.

Anthropology majors should seriously consider submitting a paper to this competition. Those of you who have taken Anthropology & World Problems know that anthropologists have interesting perspectives on population growth and its impact on the environment. If you have any questions about the competition or the Global Awareness Society, please contact Dr. Jim Pomfret in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science (extension 4504).

**BU Anthropologists' News:** Dr. Sue Dauria has organized and will chair an upcoming poster session at the American Anthropological Association meetings in Atlanta, Georgia; the meetings run from November 30 to December 4. The session is entitled "Reading the Urban Landscape: The Construction of Deindustrialization in the Northeastern United States." Dr. Dauria will also be making a presentation in the session, based on her research on inter-ethnic relations in a deindustrializing town in upstate New York.

Dr. Dee Anne Wymer attended the meetings of the Pennsylvania Archaeological Council in Ephrata, PA on October 21. She was able to pursue the possibility of BU students working at the Ephrata Cloisters, an important historical site in the coming summer. She will also attend the Southeastern Archaeological Conference in Lexington, Kentucky on November 9-12.

Dr. Tom Aleto was an invited participant at the prestigious conference on Mesoamerican archaeology held annually at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. The conference was held the weekend of October 1-2. Karen Elwell, associate professor of business law, also attended the conference.

Dr. Dave Minderhout has had a book review accepted for publication in the Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. He reviewed Language & the Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations, edited by Marcyliena Morgan for UCLA's Center for Afro-American Studies (1994). The review will appear in the January issue of the journal.